

IN SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES,

FEBRUARY 2, 1824.

MR. LLOYD, of Massachusetts, from the Committee on Naval Affairs, to whom was referred a resolution relative to the Privateer Pension Fund,

REPORTED:

That, by a law of the United States, passed June 26th, 1812, entitled "An act concerning letters of marque, prizes, and prize goods," it was enacted, that two per centum on the nett amount, after deducting all charges and expenditures, of the prize money arising from captured vessels and cargoes, and on the nett amount of the salvage of vessels and cargoes, re-captured by the private armed vessels of the United States, shall be secured and paid over to the Collector, if such captured or re-captured vessel may arrive in the United States; or to the consul, or public agent of the United States, residing at the port or place not within the United States, at which such captured or re-captured vessels may arrive; and the money arising therefrom, shall be held, and is hereby pledged, by the Government of the United States, as a fund for the support and maintenance of such persons as may be wounded or disabled on board the private armed vessels of the United States, in any engagement with the enemy, to be assigned and distributed in such manner as may, thereafter, be by law provided; that, by a law of the United States, passed February 13, 1813, entitled "An act regulating pensions to persons on board of private armed ships," the Secretary of the Navy was required to place on the pension list, under the like regulations and restrictions as are used in relation to the Navy of the United States, any officer, seaman, or marine, who, on board any private armed ship or vessel, bearing a commission of letter of marque, shall have been wounded, or otherwise disabled, in any engagement with the enemy, and to allow certain rates of pensions, therein prescribed, payable from the said fund, and from no other; which said last mentioned act was explained by an act, passed August 2d, 1813, entitled "An act to amend and explain the act regulating pensions to persons on board private armed vessels;" and that, by another act, passed March 3d, 1814, entitled "An act giving pensions to the orphans and widows of persons slain in the public or private armed vessels of the United States," pensions were authorized to be granted, for the term of five

years, to the widows, and, in certain cases, the children, of those who shall die, or shall have died since the 18th of June, 1812, by reason of a wound received in the line of their duty; which said term of five years, was extended to a further term of five additional years, by an act, passed April 16, 1818, entitled "An act in addition to an act giving pensions to the orphans and widows of persons slain in the private armed vessels of the United States," in which, further provision was also made for the widows or children of any officer, seaman, or marine, who should have died since June 18th, 1812, in consequence of an accident or casualty which occurred while in the line of his duty, on board a private armed vessel of the United States.

And the committee further report, that the pensions granted or continued, under the aforesaid acts of March 3, 1814, and April 16, 1818, have now expired, or are about expiring; that the fund has its origin exclusively from the retention of a property which would otherwise have belonged to the parties, or their connexions, receiving the benefit of it; that the faith or responsibility of the Government is not otherwise implicated, with regard to this fund, than that it should become its curator or guardian, from a principle of providence and benevolence, for the purpose of affording a shelter and support to those of the brave and hardy seamen of the United States, who, in time of war, may jeopardy their lives in battle on the mountain wave, and thus, although in private armed vessels, promote the general interests of their country, by distressing the commerce, and by impairing the mercantile, if not naval, marine of its enemy; that the faith of the nation is not, in any degree, pledged for the sufficiency, nor for any appropriation for the maintenance, of this fund; that, by a faithful administration of its concerns, and a distribution of its proceeds, as far as they will meet the objects for which they were provided, the Government will have fulfilled all its duties in relation to those who are interested in it, and that those duties will have honorably expired with the extinction of the means in which they originated.

And the committee further report, that, from information obtained from the Navy Department, it appears, there are, at this time, on the Privateer Pension Fund, so called, and which is the fund herein referred to, ninety-seven invalids, disabled in action in the line of their duty, and that there are, also, ninety-nine widows, or orphans, of persons slain or lost in private armed vessels, who now derive relief therefrom; that the aggregate annual amount of their pensions is \$ 17,608; that the principal of the fund consists of \$ 131,369 64 of the six per cent. funded debt of the United States, giving an annual income of \$ 7,882 17—leaving a deficit, including expenses, of about \$ 10,000, which has been, and must be, supplied, as occasion may require, by a sale of part of the stock belonging to the fund, involving a consequent diminution thereof, and which it has, heretofore, been indispensable to make, as will more fully appear from the letter of the Secretary of the Privateer Pension Fund, bearing date January 24, 1824, accompanying this report, and which the committee request may be received and considered as part thereof; leaving, however, more

than a sufficient amount to provide for, and meet, a still further extension of the pensions already granted, for the term of five years, in addition to the present term allowed by law; and the committee, therefore, respectfully ask leave to bring in a bill for that purpose.

NAVY DEPARTMENT,

January 24, 1824.

SIR: In the absence of the Secretary of the Navy, I have the honor to reply to your letter of the 22d instant, inquiring into "the present state of the Privateer Pension Fund, as regards the principal and income thereof, and the number of pensioners upon it, with the amount of their pensions;" and I beg leave respectfully to state, for the information of the Committee on Naval Affairs of the Senate, that the Privateer Pension Fund consists solely of six per cent. stock of the United States, to the amount of \$131,369 64, yielding an annual income of \$7,882 17. *Ninety-seven* invalids, disabled in action, or in the line of their duty, and the widows or children of *ninety-nine* persons, slain or lost in private armed vessels, derive relief from the fund, and are authorized to receive, annually, the amount of \$17,608; viz: the *ninety-seven* disabled persons are entitled to receive \$6,664, and the *ninety-nine* widows, or their orphans, at the rate, per annum, of \$10,944.

The pensions to the persons disabled, are granted during the continuance of their disability, and those to the widows or orphans, for the term of ten years. The commencement of the pensions, respectively, takes place at different periods, between the 18th of June, 1812, and the termination of the late war with Great Britain; and all the pensions granted to widows and orphans will expire between this and the 1st day of April, 1825. The number of invalid pensioners has been considerably diminished by death; and of the *ninety-seven* still retained on the list, several have not, for several years past, claimed their pensions. It is probable some of them are dead; some have recovered from the effects of the injuries they had sustained; and others are absent from the United States.

Pensions, to the annual amount of \$20,568, have been granted to the widows, or orphans, of *one hundred and ninety-seven* persons, slain or lost in private armed vessels; and *ninety-eight* of these pensions, amounting, annually, to \$9,624, have expired; some by the limitation of their term, some by death, and others by the intermarriage of the widows, without leaving children, who had been under sixteen years of age at the time of their parents' decease.

The money which accrued to the Privateer Pension Fund, and by which it is constituted, arising from a deduction of two per centum on the nett proceeds of prize-money from captured vessels and their cargoes, and, also, on the salvage of vessels and cargoes recaptured by the private armed vessels of the United States, was,

successively, on its receipt into the Treasury, invested in stock of the United States. The amount of stock thus acquired, was, at one time, \$209,580 65; but the interest on this sum, \$12,574 84, proving insufficient for the discharge of the numerous claims admitted under the different acts authorizing the issue of pensions, especially under the act approved the 16th of April, 1818, it became indispensable, either to sell part of the principal, or apply to Congress for a special appropriation in aid of the Fund. The former course was preferred; and stock, to the value of \$87,451 30, has been sold, at various times, since June, 1819; and, to meet the semi-annual payments, which will become due on the first days of January and July, every year, further sales of the principal will be inevitable, until, at least, the whole of the pensions granted to the widows and orphans, shall have been liquidated.

Should the honorable committee, of which you are chairman, desire more particular information in relation to the Privateer Pension Fund, I would respectfully refer you to a detailed report on the subject, made by the Secretary of the Navy, on the 27th of March, 1820, to the honorable the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

With the highest respect, I have the honor to be,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN BOYLE,

Secretary Privateer Pension Fund.

HON. JAMES LLOYD,

*Chairman Naval Committee,
Senate U. States.*